



State of Washington

## **DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

### **DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

**Name of Proposal:** STREAM CROSSING DESIGN GUIDELINES

**Description of Proposal:**

This is a non-project proposal. State law requires fish passage and the protection of fishlife (RCW 77.57.030 and WAC 220-110-070, among others). The Water Crossing Design Guidelines were written to help the crossing owner and designer comply with these laws. They are recommendations on the design of water crossings for fish passage and habitat protection to avoid or minimize impacts to fishlife. The Guidelines were written by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others, and will be published through the Aquatic Habitat Guidelines program.

Water crossings are structures that allow roads to cross over rivers and streams, usually by means of bridges or culverts. This includes all roads from Interstate and State Highways, county and municipal roads, forest and farm roads, and vehicle access and driveways on public and private lands. Inappropriately designed bridges and culverts can prevent fish passage and deleteriously impact fish habitat, exacerbate flooding and cause streambank erosion. They can interfere with movement of water, stream sediments and wood in normal stream processes. In a successful suit filed by Washington Treaty Tribes against the State of Washington, inappropriately designed culverts were found to impact fishery resources and the State is required to replace barrier culverts using design recommendations like those found in these guidelines.

To improve the design and construction of water crossings, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has revised the Water Crossing Design Guidelines to help the owner and designer understand fish passage and habitat protection in crossing design. With the publication of these guidelines we would hope that when a water crossing is replaced it would be replaced with a structure providing fish passage and include provisions to avoid or minimize impacts to habitat.

It should be understood that the guidelines themselves do not require action, such as the construction of a new or replacement crossing. They simply make recommendations for appropriate design of those crossings as required by State law for fish passage and habitat protection. These guidelines do not address the civil structures (the design and construction of the road fill, travel surface, culvert material, and bridge components, and the construction process involving the transport and placement of these materials), which is covered under state and local construction codes and zoning laws, as well as bridge and road design standards at all levels of government. In a given situation, the crossing owner might have to obtain permits from Federal, state and local jurisdictions in addition to the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) from WDFW.

When an owner constructs a new or replacement crossing they may cause potential adverse impacts in a number of areas, such as; the disposal of fill material or construction debris; construction activity and truck traffic and any associated impacts on traffic, noise,

or air quality during construction; the removal of a potentially valuable cultural structure (such as an old bridge); the removal of riparian vegetation; temporary or permanent impacts to the bed or banks of the stream. Some of these impacts are covered under the HPA and they are required to mitigate them. Others are not covered by the HPA but are within the jurisdiction of other state or local jurisdictions.

**Proponent/Applicant:**

Bob Barnard  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
PO Box 111, LaConner, WA. 360-466-4345 ext 255

**Location of Proposal: Statewide:** The guidelines apply to all waters of the State of Washington.

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law<sup>1</sup> does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.<sup>2</sup> We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **March 8, 2013**.

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Bob Zeigler

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/> Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Bob Zeigler at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-2578.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** February 21, 2013

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) WAC 197-11-340(2).